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THE SECRET OF THE GOLF SWING

By
A. G. RICHARDSON



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The Secret of the Golf Swing

TO the average player it may seem that the most important thing in golf is either the stance, the grip or the swing of the club. These things are of little use without the most important thing of all—body balance. It is a fact that nine out of every ten players who start to play after reaching the adult age, by their very first action in bending over to address the ball, destroy their body balance and make a proper golf swing impossible. When the body is out of balance anything is liable to happen from a slice to a complete miss, depending entirely upon the luck of the player.

It would be as well for the adult player to have thoroughly impressed upon his mind the fact that all the club swinging that may

be crowded into a twenty-four hour day will do a player little or no good unless he is swinging each time with his body in proper balance. In fact if he is out of balance he is doing more harm than good, as he is forming habits that will be hard to overcome later on.

When the average player makes a poor shot he believes it to be caused by faulty grip. He then makes his next shot with an altered grip, perhaps with a lucky improvement. Very soon, however, another stroke fails to bring the desired result and he thinks that he must have lifted his head, that his stance was wrong, that his left knee bent too soon or too late, or what not, until his entire game becomes a guessing contest, not a golf game at all. His poor throbbing brain has searched for excuses until he has reached a mental state bordering upon insanity. He

will probably wind up by spending the wee sma' hours of the night worrying as to what is wrong with his game.

If you are in a mental turmoil over the cause of bad shots and are disposed to blame stance, grip, or, even worse, clubs, let me urge you to forget it. To play a satisfactory game of golf, if your body is in balance, any golf club will produce satisfactory results, either one of a half a dozen grips will do the same, and it is agreed by leading professionals that one naturally finds the stance that suits each individual player. Another reason why you should forget all about the movement of the knees, arms, elbows, toes and what not, while making the swing, is for the very good reason that thinking about them cannot possibly do you a bit of good. The hand travels faster than the conscious mind or the eye.

If you want to see this for yourself, let the wind blow your hat off and the hand will reach for, and often catch, the hat before the conscious mind has registered the incident or before the eye has seen the top piece sail gaily away. How then are we to dip this knee or that, follow the club head through, or do the hundred and one things we are telling ourselves to do, in a movement where the hands travel faster than either the eye or the conscious mind? It is therefore certain that the sooner you clear your mind of all these worries, during the process of your swing, the sooner will your mind, as well as your eye, be able to function properly and help you in the task you are trying to accomplish, which is to hit the ball.

Let us see just what body balance means. It means that the weight of the body is distributed

as Nature intended. The average adult stands out of balance, sits out of balance; in fact, spends most of his time out of balance. Watch the average man bending at his desk and you will see that instead of bending AT the hips, as he was built to do, he bends from the shoulders TO the hips. In other words he makes a semi-circle of his spinal column, a thing never intended in Nature. He does the same thing when reaching for the telephone or for any other article, as well as when performing hundreds of actions in his daily life. It is therefore not at all strange that he should attempt to play golf out of balance. This accounts for the fact that youth, having formed no "out-of-balance" habits, is able to acquire the golfing swing without difficulty.

Now the secret of the golf swing is the ability to place the body in

proper balance at the stance, a thing that not one out of every ten golfers has learned to do. The method of accomplishing this I claim to have discovered. To show you the two ways of bending over, try bending as you now do when addressing the ball and notice how the arms go out toward the ball and the stomach away from it. The shoulders hunch toward the ball, the backbone forming itself into a rainbow curve, the head falling forward. You are now out of a natural balance and might as well expect a bent hinge to work properly as to expect the body to pivot naturally in this position. In fact every part of your operating brain will, during the swing, try its level best to keep you from tipping over, let alone devoting attention to striking the ball. The result of your swing in this position will depend entirely upon luck.

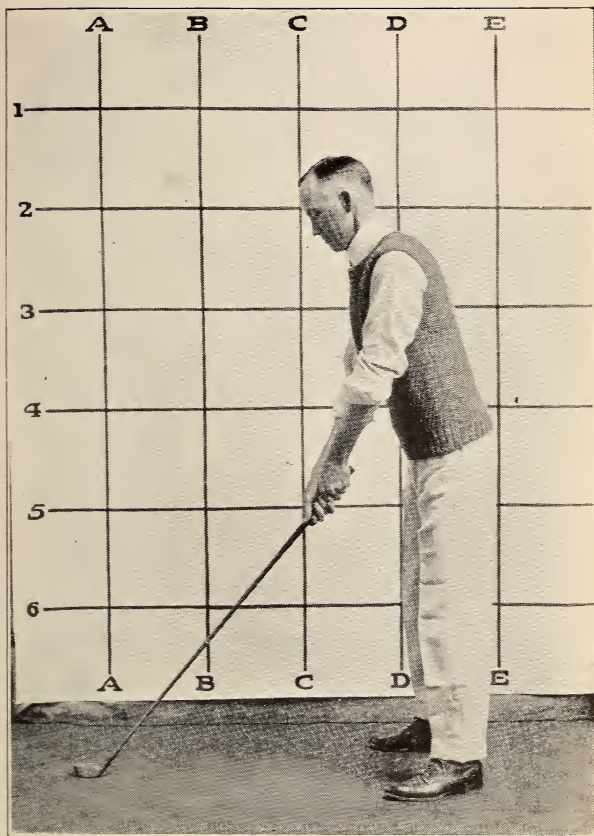
Now try bending over toward the ball **WITH THE ELBOWS PINNED TO THE SIDES**, *at the same time holding the head back*, and you will find a complete change in the distribution of your weight. The body will have bent **AT** the hips. The back will have remained straight, or nearly so, with the head held in its natural position. In fact the weight of the entire body will now be in proper balance. Now, move the arms out to their natural position in addressing the ball. Practice it until this method of bending **AT** the hips comes to you naturally, but beware, for a time at least, of a tendency of the head to fall forward. You have probably been slumping so long it will come naturally when you address the ball unless you take care each time to bend *with* the elbows and not *away* from them. **HOLD THE HEAD**

THE SECRET OF



Nine out of every ten players start their swing in this posture. Note how the head has fallen forward at 2-C and the ribs have "sagged" at 4-D. To pivot properly in this position is a physical impossibility.

THE GOLF SWING



Here the weight of the body is properly balanced. The hands have reached the same position without slumping. To make sure that slumping does not occur is not easy. A definite means of doing so is shown in this booklet.

BACK AS YOU BEND OVER.

In order that you may clearly see the difference in the two positions, pull the visor of your cap well down over the eyes. Take up your stance in the old way, by slumping the shoulders toward the ball and mark the line of the visor of your cap. Now bend over with the elbows pinned to the sides, with the head held back and you will find the hands will reach the same position as in the other stance, but the body will have retained its natural balance. The visor line or the line of vision will have remained practically the same as in an upright position, which indicates that the head has not fallen forward. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the mind and eye cannot function properly when the head is out of its natural position, acting as a dead weight, rather than as the commander of

all forces in such a difficult task?

In addition to this it is also physically impossible to pivot properly in a slumping posture. It is certain that instead of the body naturally turning *with* the hips there occurs a sort of sidewise movement of the hips and a distinct slumping at the knees. This is termed "waisting." Whatever its proper name may be, you may be assured that the result of your shot in this position depends entirely upon how lucky you are in bringing your club head to the ball.

After assuming the properly balanced stance there are one or two things to be said about the swing itself. Bear in mind that the length of the shot depends upon the width of the circle described by the club head and the speed with which it travels. The left arm forms the size of the circle. In order to keep the left arm

from bending too soon and narrowing the circle, the writer grips the club with the left arm turned as though he were trying to point the left elbow to the sky. This brings the left wrist on top of the shaft. If the left wrist is pointing toward the hole both the wrist and elbow are inclined to bend too soon and thus narrow the circle. In the position first described they will turn naturally without worrying about them. As far as the right hand is concerned get a substantial grip of the club with the thumb and forefinger.

We now come to the swing itself. You should learn how to PICK UP THE CLUB. *This consists in pressing the left elbow into a straight position, and then naturally picking up the club.* We see so many players *pull* their club and body around as if they were pulling up an anchor. Practice

PICKING UP THE CLUB (*as previously described*), taking it around and up, the body pivoting naturally. It may be well to repeat that it is a mistake to try to have the mind keep up to any movement of the hands. You have now acquired a properly balanced stance, your grip is right and you register the thought to straighten the left elbow and PICK UP THE CLUB. The swing then starts and once it has started do not ask the mind to see that the circle is thus and so, or that you make a perfect follow through, for the simple reason that the whole thing will be well over before your eye or mind catches up to the movement that is taking place.

Always remember that the golf swing is a natural swing when the body is in a natural position. This is proven by the very fact that the swing comes naturally to the

youth. We make it unnatural by assuming an unnatural, unbalanced stance. When this occurs many muscles have to work against each other. The poorest games are always the most tiring.

Therefore learn to naturally PICK UP THE CLUB. One of the leading professionals teaches his pupils to pick up the club and then throw it at the ball, as if he were throwing the head of the club away. Whether or not the mind can properly time a "throw-it-at-the-ball" idea or not, perhaps is a question, but in any event that seems to describe what actually does happen in a well-hit shot.

In playing all iron shots the same care must be used to see that the body weight is evenly balanced at the start. The inclination to "stoop" in making the stance for iron shots is even more pronounced than in others, and until it becomes

second nature one must bend with the elbows at the side, with the head held back, until he is in position to sole the club. In making iron shots the writer places the left forearm and wrist as described for the drive, in order to make sure that the club head will describe a wide, true circle. All iron shots should be played boldly. On the upstroke straighten the left elbow and PICK UP THE CLUB.

We have heard so many times the command to keep the head still and the eye on the ball, that repetition here is not necessary. I do believe, however, that one should refrain from *staring* at the ball. The eye and the mind know full well what you are trying to accomplish and they will do their level best to help you. It would sound rather silly if we told the tennis or baseball player to "keep his eye on the ball," yet that is just what he

does or at least tries to do. Take, for instance, the case of a baseball player. A ball is batted into the air and he runs to catch it. The ball descends rapidly; in fact too rapidly for the conscious mind and eye to keep up with its line of flight. Yet the hand will naturally find the line of flight to receive it and the ball lands into the open palm before the catcher realizes that he has caught it. This is undoubtedly what happens in the golf stroke. The hand naturally feels its way into the proper position before the conscious mind or eye "gets on the job." In any event do not worry about it while making the golf swing, as the ball will be well on its way before you can "keep your eye on it."

Before closing, the writer desires to say that it is neither his intention to disparage any theory or form of practice taught by older

and better players, nor is it his desire to pose as a superior player or teacher. If, however, others benefiting by his experience and study, are able to find a shorter way to good golf than that traveled by the average adult, then his effort will be considered as worthwhile. He does know from experience, however, that many discouragements will come to the player who plays badly and yet never really knows the reason for it. The writer asks that you hesitate before giving way to other remedies for your golfing ills. This formula is the result of careful analysis and practice. Keeping it before you and practicing it faithfully will pay big dividends in mental satisfaction, as well as show you the way to better golf.

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